(d) Does not arise.

Strengthening of NH-52

511. SHRI SILVIUS CONDPAN: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any project to construct a bridge over the river near district jail at Mangaldoi on NH-52 in Assam; and

(b) whether Government would consider the project to strengthen the NH-52 to be able to bear traffic intensity after the completion of Bogibil rail-cum-road bridge over Brahmaputra river?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) Yes, Sir. Construction of a bridge near Mangaldoi on NH-52 has been sanctioned for an amount of Rs. 4.24 crore.

(b) Yes, Sir. The stretch from Baihata Charali to Banderdewa is identified for four laning under National Highways Development Project (NHDP)-III for which preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) has been taken up by National Highways Authority of India. The stretches from North Lakhimpur to Jonai and from Dirak to Rupai in Assam have been identified for widening to two lanes with paved shoulders under Phase 'A' of Special Accelerated Road Development Programme-North East (SARDP-NE), which is already approved by the Government on 22.09.2005 for implementation. The work of widening to two lanes from Jonai to Dirak in Arunachal Pradesh has been approved by the Government for preparation of Detailed Project Reports under Phase 'B' of SARDP-NE. For these projects identified under SARDP-NE, Border Roads Organization (BRO) has been asked to prepare DPRs.

Revival of domestic shipping industry

512. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether, of late many shipping companies in India are moving out of the country due to a high-tax shipping regime comprising of 12 different taxes/levies;

(b) whether the problems of the domestic shipping industry has been compounded by the removal of restriction on using a foreign-flag vessel in India, denying a level playing field for the domestic shipping industry; and

(c) whether the removal of Tonnage Tax Act has shown any favourable impact on the revival of the domestic shipping industry?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Not yet Sir. However, the Indian shipping industry is burdened with a variety of taxes which is denying level playing field to the Indian industry *vis-a-vis* their international competitors.

(b) The restrictions on using foreign flag vessel in India have not been removed. In order to ease congestion in container movement at Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT)/Mumbai Port Trust, two relaxations of six months each were given under Section 407(3) of Merchant Shipping Act, 1958, in January, 2005 and August, 2005, for movement of containers by foreign ships between JNPT/Mumbai Port Trust to any other port in India or *vice versa*. Foreign flag vessels are allowed to be chartered in by an Indian entity, only in the absence of availability of matching Indian Flag vessels.

(c) There is no proposal in the Government for removal of Tonnage Tax. In fact Government has introduced the tonnage tax for shipping industry from the year 2004-05. There has been improvement in tonnage since its introduction and the gross tonnage of shipping industry has increased by 25.11% during the last two years.

Expansion of Mormugao Harbour

513. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to upgrade/expand facilities for handling of goods of the Mormugao Harbour;

(b) whether any construction work is in progress;

(c) the cost involved in the present expansion/upgradation; and

(d) the details of the future plan?